

**Amendments to the Claims:**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) **Ballasting** A ballasting device for a crane, in particular for a tower crane, combining ballast blocks that can be stacked onto a base frame-of-of the crane, and a gripper for handling the ballast blocks, the gripper being designed to be connected, during use, to a handling means, this device comprising means-of that provides a nonpermanent connection, by hooking, between the gripper-and-and a ballast block, and also means for centering the centers stacked ballast blocks-relative relative to one another, characterized in that wherein the aforementioned means of nonpermanent connection comprise handling device comprises: two opposed gripping hooks mounted pivotably, about horizontal pins, in the end regions of a lifting beam-of-of the gripper, each gripping hook having, on one side of its pivot pin, a hooking catch designed to interact with a transverse pin placed placed in a corresponding housing-of-of a ballast block, and, on the other side of its pivot pin, a rear part-attached-attached to a sling-by-by which the gripper-is-is suspended from the-a hoisting cable, each gripping hook-being assigned provided with a lock-that that is borne by the lifting beam and designed to temporarily keep the-a corresponding gripping hook in the-a position in which the transverse pin-is-is released.

2. (Currently Amended) **Ballasting** The ballasting device for a crane according to Claim 1, characterized in that claim 1, wherein the lifting beam is constituted by beam comprises two parallel bars or profiles that are secured to one another with a longitudinal gap left between them, so as to form, at the two ends of the lifting beam, clevises serving for the articulation of the two-suspension gripping hooks.

3. (Currently Amended) **Ballasting** The ballasting device for a crane according to Claim 2, characterized in that claim 2, wherein vertical protective plates are fastened onto the

two parallel bars or profiles) profiles of the lifting beam, ~~these~~ the vertical plates protecting the end region in which ~~the~~ a rear part of each of the gripping hooks travels.

4. (Currently Amended) Ballasting The ballasting device for a crane according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein a rear part ~~of~~ of each gripping hook ~~itself~~ constitutes, or bears, comprises a counterweight.

5. (Currently Amended) Ballasting The ballasting device for a crane according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein each sling forms forms an angle of less than 180° with the longitudinal axis of the corresponding gripping hook.

6. (Currently Amended) Ballasting The ballasting device for a crane according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein each lock ~~of~~ of the gripper is a lock mounted pivotably about a horizontal pin ~~borne~~ borne by the lifting beam, the lock having lock having a bent shape, with a lower part forming a counterweight, and an upper part ~~that~~ part ~~that~~ part that forms a locking catch and is provided with a ramp ~~intended to interact~~ that interacts with a control finger borne by ~~the~~ a rear part of the corresponding gripper hook.

7. (Currently Amended) Ballasting The ballasting device for a crane according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the ballast blocks, made essentially of concrete, each comprise two metal grip parts, embedded in the concrete, that each delimit a housing capable of partially receiving a one of the two opposed gripping hook hooks, each metal grip part being provided with a transverse pin pin passing through the housing delimited by said part and designed to interact with the locking catch ~~of~~ of a gripping hook engaged engaged in ~~this~~ the housing.

8. (Currently Amended) Ballasting The ballasting device for a crane according to Claim 7, ~~characterized in that~~ claim 7, wherein two right-angle positioning brackets ~~are~~ are fastened under the lifting beam, ~~these~~ the brackets ~~being~~ designed to interact, respectively,

with the upper edges of the housing delimited by the two metal grip parts of a the ballast block.

9. (Currently Amended) Ballasting The ballasting device for a crane according to claim 1, characterized in that the means further comprising a centering device for centering the stacked ballast blocks relative to one another comprise, the centering device comprising: on each ballast block, conical centering pegs that protrude above the an upper face of the ballast block, and a pair of corresponding housing of housings having a flared shape, disposed at opposing ends of the ballast blocks, in particular of conical or pyramidal shape, that open and the housing opens out in the lower face of the ballast block.

10. (Currently Amended) Ballasting The ballasting device for a crane according to Claim 9, characterized in that one of the housings of flared shape of each ballast block has the claim 9, wherein the housings have a general shape of a pyramid of rectangular base elongated in the a longitudinal direction of this the ballast block.

11. (Currently Amended) Ballasting The ballasting device for a crane according to claim 2, characterized in that claim 9, wherein the centering pegs and the corresponding housings belong to comprise metal centering parts parts, each metal centering part part extending vertically over one side of connected to a metal grip part part and being attached to the latter to constitute a single metal insert embedded in the concrete of the ballast block.

12. (Currently Amended) Ballasting The ballasting device for a crane according to claim 1, characterized in that wherein the lifting beam is provided at its ends with rings designed to receive a guide rope that can be used while handling a ballast block hooked in under the lifting beam.